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ABSTRACT

Forty-seven male chemical industry foremen in the New Orleans, Louisiana area were given a battery of tests to determine the effects of dogmatism on supervisor-subordinate relationships. The battery of tests administered included form E of the Rokeach's dogmatism scale, the Cattell Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire, and six other tests which measure skill competencies. Validity coefficients between these predictors and objective and subjective criteria of success were computed and the "good" and "poor" foremen were compared using Cattell's profile analysis technique. Major findings, using Rokeach's dogmatism scale, significantly differentiated "good" and "poor" foremen as defined by the objective criterion of union grievances. The "good" foremen had a lower frequency of first-step grievances initiated by their subordinates than did the "poor" foremen. This differentiation was supported by Cattell's 16 PF (personality factor) ratings, in which the "good" (low dogmatic) foremen were shown to be significantly more tough-minded, more self-confident, and more trusting than their less effective counterparts. These findings suggest that Rokeach's dogmatism scale may be used effectively in applied settings. (TA)

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DOGMATISM AS A PREDICTOR OF EFFECTIVE SUPERVISORY SKILLS

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When Rokeach first began his work on the dogmatic or closed mind, his central concerns centered around such cognitive factors as mental rigidity, narrow-mindedness, concreteness of thinking and reification of ideas, and the ways in which these characteristics manifest themselves in personality patterns and social behaviors. His early works found their geneses in Hoffer's True Believer (1951), Fromm's Escape From Freedom (1941) and the California group studying fascism and authoritarianism under the direction of Adorno (1950).

As a cognitive life style characterized by irrationally based intellectual and idealogical inflexibility, dogmatism became a complex concept that referred to quite a number of things, including: 1) a closed way of thinking which could be associated with any type of idealogy regardless of content or direction, 2) an authoritarian outlook on life and 3) an intolerance toward those with opposing beliefs or values. Because of the complexity of the concept, it became necessary to emphasize that dogmatism referred not so much to what people believed, but to how they believed. The high dogmatic or closed-minded individual tended to believe absolutely in whatever he believed in; there could be no qualifications. Similarly, he would reject absolutely those ideas or people that he didn't believe in; there could be no exceptions.

Most of the early experimental work on dogmatism was concerned with construct validation; that is, it attempted to verify the theory by showing how it related to various ideological factors. High dogmatism scores were shown to be related to political-social opinionation of both the right and left, and the standardization means tended to be nearly equal for groups of communists and conservatives (Rokeach, 1960). High dogmatic individuals were demonstrated to be more likely to reject others with different religious beliefs. They were also found to be intolerant and unaccepting of novel music and art, and they experienced considerable difficulty in handling abstract thought processes which involved substituting new beliefs for generally accepted beliefs in an area devoid of idealogical content, the Doodlebug problem.

Little research has been conducted that measured personality factors and dogmatism, or that looked at the nature of social interactions between people with varying levels of dogmatism. Those studies that have been done have indicated that on the California Psychological Inventory, high dogmatic subjects were significantly less tolerant, less flexible and less secure than their low dogmatic counterparts (Korn and Gidden, 1964). One study using both the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule and the Cattell Sixteen Personality Factor

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Questionnaire showed significant negative correlations between need for change and dogmatism, and between liberalism and dogmatism (Vacchiano, Strauss, & Schiffman, 1968). Another study using college student subjects revealed that on the 16 PF low dogmatic students described themselves as more intelligent (B), expedient (G), experimenting (Q_1), self-sufficient (Q_2) and more relaxed (Q_4). On the other hand, the high dogmatic students described themselves as less intelligent, conscientious, group dependent, conservative and tense (Joure, Frye, Meierhoefer and Vidulich, 1972). When high and low dogmatic subjects were placed in T-groups, behavioral differences were observed by Joure and her associates (1970, 1972). The low dogmatics were more verbal and tended to make more group-related comments, staying with the "here-and-now" more than their high dogmatic counterparts. Following these T-group experiences, the high dogmatics demonstrated increased values on cheerfulness and equality, while the low dogmatics showed increased values on honesty, happiness and inner harmony.

The dogmatism scale has not received widespread use in industrial settings, probably because it has been considered mainly a "theoretical" rather than a "practical" instrument. In 1966 Kamenske reported that dogmatism was inversely related to the acceptance of technological change in a medium-sized insurance company.

Looking at the theoretical relationships between dogmatism and authority figures, it becomes apparent that dogmatism, as measured, might be related to leadership style and consequently to leadership effectiveness. Rokeach suggested that the high dogmatic person manifests a passive-submissive orientation to authority figures and that he gains his own sense of power through identification with and emulation of "strong" leaders. Because the high dogmatic dichotomizes almost everything of importance into black/white, right/wrong categories, his belief in power is an absolute. The authority is always right and is to be revered and glorified. Research in this area has indicated that the high dogmatic perceives religious, educational and law enforcement authority figures in just such ways (Flinner, 1968; Kemp, 1963, and Larsen, 1968). When the high dogmatic himself attains a position of power or authority, it follows that he would expect others to respond to him in a similar manner to that which he himself has always manifested to authorities.

What effects, if any, might this have on supervisor-subordinate relationships? To answer this question, the dogmatism scale was included in a concurrent validation study for the selection of industrial foremen. The subjects were 47 male foremen employed by a large chemical company in the New Orleans area. The battery of tests administered included form E of the dogmatism scale, Cattell's Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire, Culture Fair Intelligence Test, Bennett Test of Mechanical Comprehension, California Mathematics Test, Differential Aptitude subtests of Abstract Reasoning, Space Relations and Clerical Speed and Accuracy, and the California Short Form Test of Mental Maturity. Validity coefficients between these predictors and objective and subjective criteria of success were computed and the "good" and "poor" foremen were compared using Cattell's profile analysis technique.

The overall findings of this study indicated that when objective criteria are employed in determining effectiveness, it is possible to distinguish between "good" and "poor" foremen on the basis of personality factors. The dogmatism scores were one of the major predictors involved in this differentiation when the objective criteria of union grievances was considered. By definition,

the good foremen had a lower frequency of first-step grievances initiated by their subordinates than did the poor foremen. The sources of these grievances included such areas as contract interpretation, past practices and foreman responsibility. The total mean dogmatism score for the 47 subjects was 156.6, which approaches the means reported by other researchers. The "good" foremen had a mean dogmatism score of 140.93, while the "poor" foremen had a mean of 169.00. This difference, which is almost four standard units apart, is significant beyond the .01 level.

In addition to being considerably more open-minded, the "good" foremen on the 16 PF were also significantly more tough-minded, more trusting and more self-assured than their less effective counterparts. All of these measured personality factor differences relate to the interpersonal skills of a leader. Cattell has described the "tough-minded" person as one who is practical, reliable and realistic, the type of person who keeps a group operating on a no-nonsense basis. The "trusting" person has been described by Cattell as an adaptable and flexible individual who is concerned about other people and who makes a good team worker. Cattell's self-assured person is mature and resilient; his positive self-concept and his unanxious, self-confidence provide him with a basis for acting decisively and calmly in relatively or potentially explosive situations.

This configuration of personality characteristics leads the good foreman to behave in a more consistent but firmer manner than his more frequently complained-about colleague. The better foreman takes his work seriously, and he handles problems as they arise in a realistic, practical and firm fashion. Although he can be a hard-nosed disciplinarian when situations merit it, his basic trust and respect for his subordinates and his inherent self-confidence enable him to function in a self-reliant, forthright and unanxious fashion.

The less effective foreman lacks this confidence and is less trusting of others. In general, the poor foreman tends toward rigid and dogmatic solutions to problems. His lack of trust and confidence in himself and others leads him to be an inconsistent disciplinarian who may not always seem fair to his subordinates. He tends to be an apprehensive worrier who allows himself to get all caught up with himself and his problems. He is not apt to be as practical nor as realistic as his more effective counterparts.

The open-mindedness of the good foreman contributes to his effectiveness by reducing rigidity in his behavior. He can enter into a problem situation and view it with minimal bias regardless of his own emotional reaction to the people or situations involved. This precludes responding in a fashion that would be perceived as unfair or prejudiced by his subordinates. He can handle potentially emotional situations without getting caught up in them in a self-defending and self-defeating fashion.

The open-mindedness of the good foreman apparently stems from his lack of need for defenses. He has an adequately developed and positive self-concept that has probably developed out of a history of successful experiences and interpersonal interactions. In general, the good foreman tends to be calm and has a mature and unanxious confidence in his ability to handle both people problems and technical problems. In group endeavors, he feels accepted and free to participate. Because this self-assurance is soundly based, the good foreman is not unduly disturbed by temporary setbacks; he does not tend to blame

himself or internalize his problems. If beset by difficulties, he will persevere, confident in his abilities to work them through to a successful completion. If he finds that he is in over his head, he can ask for assistance without feeling that he is demeaning himself by doing so. Consequently, the good foreman is seldom apprehensive or tense, and in most situations will respond in a composed, stable and mature fashion.

Although he is not naive in interpersonal interactions, the good foreman tends to be trusting of others, accepting them as they are and working with them to help realize their potential. He is not overly suspicious of his associates and behaves in understanding and conciliatory ways that tend to increase morale and cohesiveness in work units.

The most outstanding characteristic of the poor foreman, on the other hand, is his lack of personal confidence. He is not secure in his concept of himself and his abilities, and this basic lack of assurance permeates all of his professional behavior. He tends to be a closed-minded individual who supports his own position by refusing to listen to differing points of view. With his superiors he will behave deferentially, carrying out their directives without questions, and he expects his subordinates to respond the same way to him. He does not really trust his associates, or himself for that matter, and may feel that the best way to insure his continued success is through knowing his place in the hierarchy and staying in it. His lack of trust and apprehensiveness can lead him into inconsistent behaviors. He is apt to become defensively involved in problem situations and quite typically will not be perceived by his subordinates as a firm or fair disciplinarian. Because of this, he is likely to be the object of many union grievance reports, even in areas where he does not have responsibility. His behavior frequently gets caught up in a self-defeating cycle. He is usually neither well-liked nor respected by his subordinates, and at some level he reacts to this by becoming more tense and more apprehensive, thus increasing the behaviors that cause him not to be liked. Morale and cohesiveness are likely to be low in his unit.

In summary, the good foreman tends to be more open-minded, more self-confident, more tough-minded and more interpersonally trusting than his less effective colleague. His lack of rigid and dogmatically defensive behaviors contributes significantly to his effectiveness as a leader. His better self-image allows him to participate more comfortably with subordinates. He tends to be a psychologically healthy person who closely approximates the good manager as he is seen in management literature. On the other hand, the poorer foreman tends to be rigid, intolerant, dogmatic, suspicious, apprehensive and defensively sensitive. All of these behaviors reduce his effectiveness as a leader. The high dogmatic foreman exhibits many of the characteristics of the less psychologically healthy person, characteristics which could not help but hamper his interactions with subordinates. Many of these traits are not conducive to the generally accepted model of management talent.

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ABSTRACT

With a sample of 47 male chemical industry foremen, Rokeach's dogmatism scale significantly differentiated good and poor foremen as defined by the objective criteria of union - grievances. The "good", low dogmatic foremen, were also significantly more tough-minded (-I), more self-confident (-O) and more trusting (-L) on Cattell's 16PF than were their less effective counterparts. These findings suggest that Rokeach's dogmatism scale may be used effectively in applied settings and lend support to his theoretical contentions concerning the relationships between dogmatism and authority figures.